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### The Race Problem in South Africa

*This report is based on material gathered by RAYMOND LESLIE BUELL in the course of an intensive study of racial problems in Africa, the results of which have recently been published under the title, THE NATIVE PROBLEM IN AFRICA.\* The racial question is particularly important in the Union of South Africa. There the native population outnumbers the white nearly four to one. Both groups regard South Africa as their home. The whites have achieved economic and political control, which they have no intention of surrendering despite the growing numbers and power of the natives, who are coming to demand an increasing share in the government and in the economic life. New legislation, embodied in four bills representing the native policy of Prime Minister Hertzog, has been presented to the South African Parliament and is today arousing widespread discussion among both the native and European populations.—ED.*

**M**ORE than a million white people have taken up their residence in South Africa, drawn by its semi-temperate climate

and its great wealth. First colonized by the Dutch under van Riebeck in 1652, the Cape of Good Hope passed to the British following the Napoleonic wars. In the following 100 years the Dutch moved inland to found the Republic of South Africa and the Orange Free State, while the Cape of Good Hope and Natal remained British colonies. Countless disputes soon arose between the Dutch Republics and the British territories, the upshot of which was the Boer War of 1899. After reducing the Dutch Republics to colonies, the British conferred self-government upon them and in 1909 induced the four territories in South Africa to enter a Union.

At the present time the European population is almost evenly divided between Britisher and Boer—a division which has created important problems. There are also 170,000 Indians in the country who have been the object of discriminatory legislation, partially alleviated by the South Africa-Indian Agreement of 1927. A fourth element consists of the "colored" population—the product of European and native unions—which numbers half a million. The bulk of

\* Buell, R. L., *The Native Problem in Africa*. New York, Macmillan, 1928.

the population consists of the "Kafirs," or natives, belonging to the Bantu race.

#### COMPROMISE SOLUTION OF INDIAN LABOR DIFFICULTIES

In passing, some mention should be made of the Indian difficulties which were so prominent during the first quarter of the century. These now seem to be well on the way toward a solution. Between 1860 and 1866 the sugar planters of Natal imported Indian indentured labor. The majority of these laborers upon the termination of their contracts turned to farming or trade, where they came into competition with the white man. Considerable friction arose from this situation. In order to induce these Indians to return home at the end of their contract, the Natal Government in 1895 enacted a law subjecting all Indians who remained to an annual tax of three pounds a head, and in 1897 passed an Immigration Act providing for the restriction of immigration through an education test—a system later applied in Australia against the Japanese.

This and other discriminatory legislation directed against the Indians in South Africa led to a number of difficulties which cannot be discussed here.<sup>1</sup>

Certain grievances were removed by the passage of the Indians Relief Act of 1914. But following the War and the growth of Indian influence, the Smuts Government introduced the Class Areas bill authorizing the establishment of separate residential and trading areas for persons having common racial characteristics. The Government of India as well as Indian organizations made a vigorous protest against the bill, and, as a result, the Hertzog Government which came to power in 1924, agreed to hold a round table conference with the Indian Government on the subject. This round table conference took place at Cape Town between December 17, 1926 and January 11, 1927. A "Gentleman's Agreement" was reached in which both governments "re-affirm their recognition of the right of South Africa to use all just and legitimate means for the maintenance of Western standards of life." The South Africa Government announced its decision to drop the Segrega-

tion Bill. It also announced its intention to organize a system of assisted emigration in which it agreed to furnish free passage and a bonus of twenty pounds to any Indian in South Africa wishing to return to India. It also agreed to take certain steps to improve the condition of those Indians wishing to remain in South Africa. The *Cape Times* of South Africa commented on this settlement as follows:

"In bringing this about, the Union Government has done good service to South Africa, to the world, and to the cause of the Empire. The friendship of India is a moral and material asset that South Africa will never regret possessing; she has shown the world that it is possible for East and West to meet and talk and understand, even when vital issues are concerned. . . . In solving her share of a problem that is destined in various forms and guises to be one of the most vital and difficult that mankind will have to face during the next 100 years, South Africa has vindicated her young nationhood and taken her place among the advanced peoples of the world."

#### RECRUITING SYSTEM EMPLOYED IN THE MINES

While the Indian population has created difficulties, the fundamental problem in South Africa today is the relation of the negro to the white. Unlike the American pioneers, the Europeans in South Africa rely almost wholly upon native labor. This is especially true of the gold mines of the Transvaal, the diamond mines of Kimberley, and the coal mines of Natal. Likewise the Boer farmer relies for his labor upon native boys. Left to himself the native would prefer to live at home tending his cattle and cultivating just enough land to supply the simple wants of his family. To induce natives to accept employment the whites have been obliged to resort to a number of expedients. The Transvaal Chamber of Mines organized the Native Recruiting Corporation, which has placed recruiters throughout the native territories, who induce men to sign contracts to work at the mines. In the past many abuses in this recruiting system have existed. Although today recruiters occasionally get men heavily into debt, from which a labor contract is the only escape, the system is much improved over what it was a number of years ago. The Recruiting Corporation submits the natives to a medical

1. For details, see Buell, R. L., *The Native Problem in Africa*. Vol. I, p. 24 ff.

examination and provides them with transportation, food, and clothing en route. Upon arriving at the mines the natives are given another examination, their finger prints are taken, and then they are sent to work. In addition to the incentives furnished by this recruiting system, the South African natives are induced to spend a part of every year or two at the mines by the necessity of obtaining money to pay their taxes—money which they cannot secure at home because of the absence of opportunities for employment. Once at the mine, it is a criminal offense for the native to desert.

#### PORTUGUESE LABOR CREATES SPECIAL PROBLEMS

The mines of the Transvaal rely not only upon labor from within the Union but also upon labor imported from adjacent Portuguese territory. At present there are about 105,000 East Coast boys at work in the Transvaal. These boys have been recruited under authority of a convention between the Portuguese Government and the Union of South Africa entered into in 1909. Under this convention the Portuguese Government agreed to permit recruiting within the territories under its direct administration, which excludes the area administered by the Mozambique and Nyasa companies. Recruiting licenses are issued by the Mozambique Government to applicants certified by the Secretary for Native Affairs of the Union. Before leaving Mozambique every laborer must be supplied with a passport available for one year, for which a fee of thirteen shillings is paid. Laborers cannot be engaged for more than a year, but they may be re-engaged for the same period.

The actual recruiting of Portuguese labor is in the hand of the Witwatersrand Native Labor Association, established by the Chamber of Mines. It has about 75 stations in Mozambique and employs about thirty European and 250 native recruiters. The Portuguese Government has a Curator at Johannesburg who looks after the interests of the Portuguese natives, collects fees, and transmits money for the natives to their families in Portuguese East Africa.

In April, 1922, the Smuts government served notice of termination of the Conven-

tion of 1909 for reasons connected, not with the labor features, but with provisions regarding the railway and port of Lourenço Marques, over which the Smuts government wished to obtain greater control. Negotiations over the latter subject ended in a complete deadlock, but it was arranged that the part dealing with native labor should be provisionally continued.

The presence of this alien labor on the Transvaal mines has been severely criticized, on the ground that it keeps down the wages paid the Union native, and on the ground that it is physically and socially harmful to the Portuguese native. The death rate of the Portuguese natives on the mines is twice that of the Union natives. The death rate of natives coming from the more tropical parts of Mozambique was so great that in 1914 the South African Government prohibited the recruiting of such natives north of twenty-two degrees south latitude.

#### LABOR CONDITIONS IN PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA

Moreover, it should be pointed out that large numbers of the East Coast natives have proceeded to Johannesburg to escape the labor exactions of the Portuguese Government. Until recently the Portuguese Government was alone among the governments of Africa in legalizing compulsory labor for private purposes. The system was administered in such a manner that many Portuguese natives preferred to go to Johannesburg rather than remain at home. In 1926, the Portuguese Government, apparently as a result of the influence of the League of Nations, abolished compulsion for private labor and declared that forced labor could be employed only when "absolutely indispensable for the public good and in very urgent cases."<sup>2</sup> If this new decree is really enforced, the South African mines may find it more difficult to induce Portuguese laborers to leave their homes.

The Hertzog Government reopened negotiations with the Portuguese in regard to the Convention of 1909. But during the course of these negotiations, the Portuguese demanded the right to restrict recruiting at their pleasure. While the export of labor

2. Decree No. 12,533 of October 23, 1926. *Boletim Oficial da Província de Moçambique*, November 27, 1926, p. 351.

was an immediate source of profit to the government, it was realized that this migration was a drain on the country. Moreover, the Portuguese Government is now developing an irrigation project in the basin of the Limpopo River. It is believed that the development of the area thus made available will take at least 100,000 men, and the Portuguese Government wishes to divert labor from the Transvaal to this local enterprise.

#### NEW CONVENTION ON MOZAMBIQUE LABORERS

In April, 1928, negotiations in regard to a new convention were opened at Lisbon. The Portuguese Government stated its willingness to allow "natives that can be spared" to go to the Rand. It asked that 75 per cent of the wages of such natives be deposited to be paid to the natives on returning home.<sup>3</sup> In the convention as finally concluded on May 16, 1928, the arrangements for the recruiting of natives, except north of parallel latitude twenty-two degrees south, remain as before, with certain exceptions. The maximum number of Mozambique natives allowed on the mines will be 80,000, and half of each native's pay during the final three months of his initial term is to be retained as deferred pay and paid out to him on his return to Mozambique. Natives must return to Mozambique upon the termination of their contracts; otherwise they will be treated by South Africa as prohibited immigrants.<sup>4</sup> The system of deferred pay, provided for by the convention, has been criticized on the ground that the native does not always receive his back wages upon returning home.

#### URBAN HOUSING CONDITIONS

Altogether about 890,000 natives, or sixteen per cent of the total native population, have been induced to take up their residence in the urban areas of South Africa. About

500,000 live in the Johannesburg mining areas. Those who are employed by the mines live in compounds—barrack-like affairs where their employers go to great pains to see that they are well housed and fed and that they receive adequate medical attention. The death rate in these compounds in 1926 was only nine per thousand—an extremely low figure. The remainder of the natives, working for thousands of different employers, supposedly live in native locations which are attached to each European city. Until recently, these locations have been inadequate for native needs. Over-crowding accompanied by tuberculosis and various kinds of immorality have been rampant—conditions which have endangered the existence of the adjoining white community. Rents have been so excessive in many locations that few natives have been able to afford decent housing.

Following the warnings of half a dozen Government Commissions, the Union Parliament in 1923 enacted the Urban Areas Act which obliges municipalities to set a part of the town aside in which natives must live, and which places full responsibility for the administration of urban natives upon the municipality. As a result of this Act, the cities of South Africa are now constructing model locations which contain cottages available at reasonable rents, schools and other communal facilities. Native councils are also being organized in these locations. If a city does not live up to its responsibilities, the Union Government may intervene.

#### CONTRAST BETWEEN NATIVE AND EUROPEAN WAGES

While this act may lead better housing conditions, some observers are of the opinion that the moral and social conditions of nearly 1,000,000 natives cannot be fundamentally improved so long as they must live in industrialized centers under the present economic system. The South Africa native is allowed to occupy only the most subordinate positions in European industry, and at extremely low wages. Real wages of Europeans in South Africa are higher than in any place else in the world except in the United States, Canada, and Australia. But the per capita income (including that of natives) in South Africa is much lower than

3. *Times*, May 1, 1928, p. 15.

4. *Cape Times*, May 17, 1928. The Convention also guarantees to the Lourenço Marques railway a percentage of the seaborne traffic for the Transvaal area, equal to present importations through the port of Lourenço Marques, about 50 per cent. Certain products will be admitted into the Union free from Mozambique. Transit trade is free. There does not seem to be any provision in the convention granting the Union control over the Lourenço Marques harbor, which it at one time demanded. Buell, "The Struggle in Africa," *Foreign Affairs*, October, 1927, p. 37.



in these three countries, and is upon the same level as the income of Germany or Italy. Thus, while the capacity of South Africa to pay wages is much lower than that of many other countries, the European wages are among the highest in the world. The explanation is that unskilled labor in South Africa is invariably performed by natives who are paid, not according to the law of supply and demand, but according to the dictates of the Chamber of Mines, whose decisions are followed by other employers. The wages of native mine labor is actually lower in shillings today than in 1897.

The average native wages in Johannesburg range from \$15 to \$25 a month. According to figures prepared for the Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Natives, a native family budget in Johannesburg for a family of five amounts at the minimum to \$30 a month. The gap between this income and expenditure is made up by the work of the wives who go out to char or take in washing. In a report issued in February, 1928, on "The Native in Industry," the Council adds that "in a deplorable number of cases additional income is made by the illicit sale of liquor to mine natives, single men, and visitors to town." It states that in many towns natives are inadequately nourished.

As a result of this wage system, South African industry tends to organize itself on a basis of a small number of highly paid Europeans and a large number of cheap native laborers. Under such a system, the openings for Europeans are limited, as a result of which there is no incentive for the European population to increase. The less capable Europeans find difficulty in fitting themselves into the industrial organization. Obligated to perform some form of unskilled labor, they find that they must compete against the natives, which means that their standards of living are lowered and that they degenerate into the "Poor White" class, already numbering about a tenth of the European population.

#### **COLOR BAR RAISED IN SKILLED INDUSTRIES**

In order to protect the highly-paid European community against the growth of a

skilled native artisan class, such as is rapidly developing in the Belgian Congo and in British West Africa, a white man's parliament enacted the Mines and Works Act in 1911, which authorized the Governor-General to refuse, as he sees fit, certificates of competency to persons employed in operating machinery. Under this act the government issued regulations limiting the operation of machinery to white men in the Transvaal and Orange Free Province—Dutch territory where such restrictions had previously existed and which contain the mining areas. The *status quo* remained in the other provinces. This Color Bar was introduced in thirty-two out of fifty-one different skilled occupations in the mines.

During the war the South African Mine Workers' Union, a European organization, was strong enough to insist that semi-skilled work, such as drill-sharpening and track-laying, should be performed by white men. Because of the rapid decline in gold prices, the mine operators finally served notice on the European workers that greater use of native labor in semi-skilled occupations must be made. When the mine operators declined to accept a ratio of one white for every 4.5 blacks under employment, the Unions voted a strike in 1921. Extremists soon got the upper hand in the strike and voted to overthrow the South Africa Government and establish a republic. Following armed attacks on Europeans, the government established martial law, and in the military operations which followed nearly 800 people were killed. As a result of the strike the mine operators terminated their previous agreement excluding natives from semi-skilled labor, while two years later a Transvaal court held invalid the regulations excluding natives from skilled employment which it declared was "unreasonable, capricious and arbitrary." Thus the European miners found themselves confronted with the abolition of the Color Bar not only in semi-skilled, but skilled industry. They attributed this state of affairs to an alliance between "capital" and the Smuts Government.

Consequently the Labor Party joined with the Nationalists under General Hertzog, who won the elections and established a coalition government in 1924 which is still in power. General Hertzog was obliged to

pay for the support of the Labor Party by a promise to restore the Color Bar. In May, 1925, therefore, the government introduced legislation authorizing the exclusion of natives from skilled positions in industry. In defense of the measure, the Hertzog Government stated that it merely wished to restore the *status quo*. But fearing that if it gave express sanction to this policy, the government would later extend the Color Bar to the Cape Province and Natal, the Senate defeated the measure in 1925, which led the Government under a constitutional provision to call a joint session in the following year which passed the act, following an acrid debate.

#### LOW NATIVE WAGES AN ECONOMIC FALLACY

As yet, few natives are qualified for skilled positions. Nevertheless, it is logical to believe that their number would rapidly grow under a proper educational system if opportunities for employment existed. The Economic and Wage Commission of South Africa has recently stated that, "by restricting and reducing the native's opportunities of earning a livelihood, the policy of excluding the native from industrial occupations reduces his ability to pay, and therefore his value as a market for the manufacture in which European labor is engaged. Thus the policy that sets out to provide additional openings for white employment may so check the growth of wealth as a whole that it defeats its own ends. . . ." It declared that in the interest of the white it is necessary to raise the economic level of the native. Otherwise, keeping down native wages meant a growing danger to the whites obliged to compete with natives. It declared that the white man has "less to fear from an improvement than from a deterioration in the economic status of the native, while both stand to gain from any increase, and stand to lose from any decrease in the volume of wealth produced as a whole."

Manufacturing interests have utilized the Color Bar and the artificially high wages paid to whites which accompany it as an argument for the enactment of high tariffs. But mining, which produces two-thirds of the total exports, and agriculture necessarily

cannot be protected. The price of gold and diamonds is fixed on a world market, as is the price of maize. The Economic and Wage Commission declared that, as a result of protecting manufactures, agriculture, mining and the professions are paying from five to thirty per cent more than is necessary in order to obtain products necessary to develop their industries. This policy naturally discourages agricultural development in which the real hope of the future lies.

Other forms of the Color Bar also exist. Natives cannot acquire land from the government or from individuals except in certain areas. "Jim Crow" laws, enforced by convention if not by regulation, also abound. In order to identify natives living outside of native territories and to control their movements so as to prevent crime and desertion from employment, the different provinces of South Africa impose upon the natives (but not the whites) some form of pass system. In Natal it is estimated that under certain circumstances a native is required to carry eight different kinds of passes. The irritation caused by this system was so great that in 1913 a number of native women started a passive resistance movement, as a result of which they were imprisoned. In 1918 the municipal employees in Johannesburg attempted to strike, but found that they could not legally do so because of the pass system. Native strikes are also illegal by virtue of the fact that desertion is a penal offense. In 1920 a Commission recommended the abolition of the pass system in favor of a simple certificate of identification. So far, however, the Union Government has failed to enact such legislation. Outside of the Cape Province, natives are also excluded from the franchise and any control over the government of the country.

#### NATIVE HANDICAPS IN COUNTRY AREAS

In some respects the native in the country suffers more handicaps than the native in the city. About 83 per cent of the total native population regard the country as their home. Prior to the coming of the Europeans, the native tribes lived where they liked, subject to the fortunes of inter-tribal wars. In many cases the European

settlers became involved in struggles with these tribes and sometimes the Bantus were the aggressors. In time, European governments established authority over the country and alienated the land with little regard for native custom or interests. Both the Cape Province and Natal, however, set aside certain locations and reserves for native occupation, and as a result of British insistence, the Transvaal Government set aside certain areas as native locations, which today occupy 2,120 square miles. Except for two locations at Witzies Hoek and Thaba 'Nchu, there are no native reserves in the Free State. These reserves, totalling about 11,000,000 *morgen* of land, constitute 7.13 per cent of the total area of the country.<sup>5</sup> Natives have also secured about 1,000,000 *morgen* of land outside of the reserves, so that altogether the natives may regard as their own 8.3 per cent of the total land in the Union. In comparison with 13,000,000 *morgen* held by natives, nearly 110,000,000 *morgen* are held by Europeans. The majority of the rural natives in the Transvaal, Free State, and Natal in the country live upon European farms. The condition of both classes, whether in the reserves or upon European farms, has frequently occasioned comment. The population density in many reserves is more than fifty per square mile. No land is available for the rising generation, and, because of a communal system of tenure, it is impossible for one farmer to improve his land because of more backward neighbors. Erosion is rapidly breaking down the soil. Typhus and tuberculosis are spreading throughout the country, partly because in some sections of the reserves a native must carry water for domestic use more than four miles. It is the opinion of cautious doctors that scurvy, a disease of malnutrition, is definitely on the increase in the Cis-kei area.

#### LIVING CONDITIONS IN CAPE PROVINCE

The condition of the natives in part of the Cape Province, is revealed by the following quotation from a summary of a questionnaire sent out by the Cis-kei Missionary Council:

"In the Division of Victoria East there are at this date 2,776 adult male natives resident on Crown Lands, but the number of surveyed allotments is only 1,700. There are therefore 1,076 adult males, the heads or the potential heads of families, who have no garden allotments, and no ground on which to grow food, unless a relative or a neighbor shares with them his own small holding. It is in keeping with this information that it is reported that a large number of families have neither cattle nor goats, and that although sheep are now far more commonly owned than formerly, the families possessing any are comparatively few. As might be expected from the circumstance that the land is too scarce to admit of its being rested or reinvigorated by rotation of crops, and manuring is not practiced, the yield of foodstuffs is stated to be decreasing, or in a few cases stationary. Farm implements, because of an awakening interest in improved agriculture, are coming into increased use in some parts, but wagons are few and disappearing except in those areas where their owners can earn a living out of them by transport riding.

"Huts and other forms of dwellings are said to be improving in a fair number of areas, notably in regard to a better and more permanent style of thatching and the introduction of ventilator spaces or glazed windows in their walls; but in others, perhaps the majority of districts, little improvement is observable in material or structure, and the appearance of the villages is deteriorating. The difficulties of obtaining sites and of procuring the necessary materials keep down the numbers of the dwellings below the requirements of health and decency. Much overcrowding is reported from no fewer than 67 per cent of the districts under review. As a feature of the trend towards European ways of living now becoming manifest, notwithstanding their poverty in so many aspects of native life, European furniture exists to some small extent in some huts in most villages.

"The staple food continues to be maize, which is eaten crushed or pounded, or, what is common in times of scarcity, whole and unstamped. For a large proportion of the people maize is the sole regular diet, almost all the year round. In only thirteen per cent of the districts is it reported as commonly supplemented by milk, which was once so important and so universal an article of diet with the Bantu. Butcher meat, as a regular or even frequent element in the daily food is rare. The use of bread is confined to town locations and their neighborhood, as also of groceries, except that in some considerable areas tea and coffee are supplying the place of milk with those that can afford them. In years of normal rainfall there is said to be sufficiency of food in 66 per cent of the districts reported upon. In the remainder, however favorable the season may be, it is not enough except just at harvest time.

<sup>5</sup>. A *morgen*, the measure of surface used in South Africa, is roughly equivalent to about two acres.

"All over the country a large proportion of the people have to supplement what they grow by buying. In times of scarcity over one-third of the population becomes dependent upon the earnings of those who have gone out to work at the labor centers. A few can obtain credit from the traders, in some districts more, in others where the poverty is deepening fewer, and others possess a reserve of stock on which they fall back. But many, in times of continued severe drought, have nothing to stand between them and starvation except the mercy of their neighbors, who are only just a little better off than themselves. In a fairly large proportion of districts wood fuel is obtainable; elsewhere the people depend upon cow dung and dry weeds. Water is permanently scarce in a good many native districts, and the supply is said to be decreasing, which is what should be expected where the commonages are worn bare by overstocking, and the scrub and bush are being completely used up or destroyed.

"A well-to-do, prosperous class of native peasants or workers is reported from only twenty-two per cent of the districts. Where such are found they are represented as numbering about one family in ten of their communities, an estimate hardly borne out by other figures relating to the same districts. In nearly every report wages are referred to as too low, with the consequence that debt is extremely prevalent. In many districts practically the whole native population is said to be involved in debt, and borrowing at crushing rates of interest is the rule. As might be expected in these conditions Savings Banks have made little headway, and thrift, except in the accumulating of cattle, if there is scope for it, is little practiced."<sup>6</sup>

Those natives living outside of the reserves must live upon European or government land, usually as wage earners or squatters under a European land-owner. Separated many miles from the authorities, these farm laborers are under the control of the landlords. Practically the majority of the natives on European farms are squatters, who rent land from European owners in return for a share of the crop, a certain period of labor, or, in a few cases, cash. So profitable has this system been that many landlords prefer to rent land to natives than work it themselves. In 1905 a Native Affairs Commission declared that the system was pernicious in that it encouraged absentee landlordism while it barred native progress by insecurity of tenure. Likewise, it was believed that the system restricted the labor supply and that native squatters did not develop the land properly.

6. *The South African Outlook*, March 1, 1928.

## DISCRIMINATION AGAINST NATIVE LAND OWNERSHIP

Disturbed by the growth of squatters and also by the increasing purchases of land outside of the reserves by natives from Europeans, the Union Parliament enacted the Native Land Act of 1913. This act definitely forbade natives from purchasing land outside of existing native locations, except in areas to be defined by a Commission. In these native purchase areas natives should in the future have the exclusive right of purchase.

The 1913 Act also prohibited all new agreements whereby the native secured the use of land through the payment of rent, whether in cash or in kind. The native could continue to live on European land only on condition that he agreed to work ninety days a year for the owner. Many natives declined to accept this position, and as a result they were driven off the land into the cities or into the already over-crowded reserves.

Following the passage of this Act, the Government appointed the Beaumont Commission which mapped out native purchase areas which would eventually bring the total amount of native land in the Union to about 18,000,000 *morgen*—sixteen per cent of the total area. But the European population believed that this was too generous. Consequently, the question was referred back to committees in each province. These committees in most cases cut down the Beaumont areas. But despite this fact, Parliament took no action. Meanwhile, however, the Government allowed natives to purchase land in the Committee areas.

Even should the plan contemplated in the 1913 Act be carried out, the native population would be confined to about a sixth of the land in the Union, while the remainder would be owned by the Europeans, who number less than a quarter of the native population. This discrimination in favor of the European might be justified if the Europeans actually used their land. But it has been obtainable upon such easy terms and in such large areas that the South African farmer in many cases has lacked the capital to develop it. Out of 171,000 farms, 86,000



are unoccupied at the present time. Finding it impossible to develop his holdings intensively, the South African farmer has usually become a pastoralist. In other cases he has signed *bijwoner*, or tenant, agreements with poverty-stricken white men and in other cases with native squatters. A system of land taxation would oblige these farmers either to develop their holdings or to dispose of the land.

#### **NATIVE GROUPS OPPOSE DISCRIMINATION**

Such has been the situation of the South African native. Deprived of an opportunity of earning an independent living by the fact that the land has been held almost entirely by Europeans, and obliged to pay taxes of usually a pound a year, most of the natives have been obliged to make periodic sojourns to the mines or to accept other forms of industrial employment. While they are now reasonably well treated, they are underpaid and forbidden from rising in the scale of industrial employment. Subject to pass laws, Jim Crow regulations, and other forms of discrimination, and deprived, except in the Cape, of all control over the government which imposes these restrictions, the natives, who outnumber the whites nearly four to one, have naturally felt a sense of grievance.

With the growing education of the native, this sense of grievance has increased. Within recent years it has become vocal through strikes at the mines and among the municipal employees at Johannesburg, in riots at Port Elizabeth, and in the Elijah trouble at Bulhoek. This feeling has been more peacefully expressed by such native political organizations as the South African National Congress and the Bantu Union, and by the Industrial and Commercial Union, a syndicalist enterprise of extremist tendencies, under the leadership of Clements Kadalie. This Union, which claims a membership of 80,000 has attacked the European employer with great bitterness and severity. Proclaiming the class war between capital and labor and between white and black, it is openly working to organize a general strike on the mines. While the Government has recently introduced "sedition" legislation for the purpose of silencing natives like Kadalie,

the Hertzog Government has come to realize that a policy of repression will avail little, and that some constructive native policy is necessary if the future of South Africa as a white man's country is to be saved.

#### **TWO POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS: EQUALITY AND DIFFERENTIATION**

For a number of reasons, no serious effort to approach the native problem in South Africa was made until 1925. Two lines of thought are evident. The Cape Province has supported Cecil Rhodes dictum of "equal rights for all civilized men." It believes that no racial discrimination of any kind should exist and that personally qualified natives should participate alongside the whites in industry, society, and politics. The expression of this theory so far has been restricted to the franchise. In the Cape Province 14,000 out of a total of 156,000 voters are natives.

A second theory which has been advanced is that of Differentiation. The advocates of this theory believe that there is a fundamental distinction between a European with a civilized background, centuries in duration, and a native only a few years removed from primitive conditions. They do not believe that a black man may become a white man merely as a result of a few years of literary education; whatever the achievements of individual natives may be, they form part of a group from which they do not escape simply by the acquisition of a literary education. While a few leaders may become civilized their group remains uncivilized. The opponents of the Cape theory assert that the welfare of the natives as a whole can best be promoted not by a policy of assimilation but of developing the native group as a whole, upon its own and not upon European lines. They fear the extension of the native vote in European elections. In their opinion, this would eventually mean that the whites would be outvoted by blacks—the ultimate result of which would be an inter-racial war. The natives should be given a part of South Africa upon which they may build, with European assistance a political system of their own and also live a self-sufficing economic existence. Instead of attempting to build an amalgam of white

and black, an effort should be made, according to the proponents of Differentiation, to build up parallel civilizations. To the objection that the white man is dependent upon black labor, the proponents of this theory state that the white man should learn to work for himself, that the unskilled labor on the mines should be performed by the whites; they quote statistics to show that the mines will within half a century be exhausted anyway.

#### FOUR PROPOSALS OF THE HERTZOG GOVERNMENT

While he realizes that it is impossible to separate the races in South Africa into water-tight compartments, Prime Minister Hertzog has accepted the theory of Differentiation, and he has formulated proposals with a view to the partial application of the theory. He does not contemplate the removal of the native from European communities, but he supports Color Bar legislation within European communities to prevent natives from breaking down European standards. On the other hand, he proposes certain measures to build up communities for a portion of the native population.

These proposals were formulated in four bills presented to Parliament in 1926:

1. The Representation of Natives in Parliament Bill
2. The Union Native Council Bill
3. The Native Land Act, 1913, Amendment Bill
4. The Colored Persons Rights Bill

The first bill takes away the franchise from the Cape native, which General Hertzog believes is a threat to the Union. As a substitute the bill provides for the election of seven European members to the Union Assembly by eligible natives throughout the Union as a whole. These representatives may not speak or vote on any matters of non-confidence in the Ministry except twelve different subjects of direct concern to the natives. This provision is inserted to prevent the European representatives of "native" interests from holding the balance of power in Parliament.

The second measure establishes a Union Native Council of thirty-five elected native members and fifteen appointed members

which, meeting annually, should enact with the consent of the government laws affecting the native population. By means of this Council and of local native councils authorized in an Act of 1920, the government believes it is erecting the political basis of parallel native communities.

#### 1927 AMENDMENT TO NATIVE LAND ACT

The great and fundamental obstacle to the establishment of such communities is the shortage of native land. If black areas are to be established more native land is essential. In theory the Hertzog Government has recognized this necessity. It proposes to amend the 1913 Land Act so as to give the natives the right of purchase in the areas recommended by the local committees, which are now called "released areas." But unlike the 1913 Act which proposed to reserve purchases in these areas exclusively to natives, the 1927 amendment would allow both Europeans and natives to compete against each other in acquiring this land. This Act provides for the establishment of a Native Land Purchase Fund composed of sums derived from certain fees and from appropriations by Parliament, which may be used in the purchase of land for natives. The Act also provides that a native squatter may reside on land only on condition that the European landlord pay the government a fee of three pounds. A labor tenant, *i. e.*, a person who agrees to work 180 days for the landlord, can reside only on condition that the employer pays the government a sliding fee of from 2s. 6d. to two pounds. The number of squatters and tenants may also be controlled by local boards composed mostly of European farmers who presumably will exercise their power to prevent a wasteful employer from locking up a potential labor supply. No other natives, apart from regular laborers, may occupy European land. Opponents of the bill state that the fees and licenses charged for squatters and laborers are so high that the effect of this Act will probably be to drive natives into the continuous employment of landlords or into the cities or reserves which are already overcrowded.

The fourth bill proposes to wean the colored people away from the native popu-

lation by giving them a European status. It provides that after a period of seven years Parliament may authorize the government to place colored voters upon the ordinary European voters list. The Act restricts these privileges, however, to colored persons born before the commencement of the Act. It does not wish to encourage the growth of the colored population in the future.<sup>7</sup>

#### CRITICISM OF THE HERTZOG PROPOSALS

A large number of natives and Europeans severely criticized these proposals following publication. They declared that the composition of the native electorate for the seven representatives in Parliament and for the elected members of the Union Council rests with the discretion of the government which may handpick the voters; if natives are to be represented in Parliament, they should be represented by natives and not by Europeans. The government was inconsistent in proposing to grant the colored population a European status and yet to withhold this status from the natives since the difference between a colored person and a native is in many cases imperceptible.

Even more vigorous criticisms were directed against the Franchise and Land Bills. The natives regarded the Cape franchise as a symbol of a status which eventually they should enjoy throughout the Union. They did not by any means regard the substitution of seven European representatives in Parliament as an equivalent to the loss of the Cape franchise. The Land Bill did nothing substantial to relieve the rural population, while its terms in regard to natives living on European lands would result, according to the Johannesburg Joint Council, in a condition no better than that which existed under slavery. "Theirs will be forced labor in its most acute form."

The Hertzog proposals were discussed by a select committee of Parliament in the session ending August, 1927. But with the exception of the passage of the Native Lands Further Release and Acquisition Act, no action on the bills was taken by Parliament.<sup>8</sup>

7. For the land acreage available under this bill, see Appendix, p. 276.

8. *Union Gazette Extraordinary*, July 5, 1927, xxiii. This act re-arranges the areas laid down in the Native Land Act of 1913.

They are still pending, and in the House of Assembly Prime Minister Hertzog announced on April 25, 1928 that he did not intend to proceed with the native bills this session. The public should be given more time to study them in their amended form.<sup>9</sup>

#### WHITE INTERESTS HAMPER CONSTRUCTIVE LEGISLATION

It is evident that this legislation, together with the Color Bar Act, thoroughly protects the white man in white communities, which nevertheless continue to rest upon a foundation of native labor. In return for barring native industrial and political advancement in these white communities, the Hertzog proposals establish political machinery which may eventually serve to govern native communities. But the government has failed to provide land making possible the creation of these communities as far as a large proportion of the native population is concerned. The fundamental objection to the Hertzog program as it at present stands is that while it bars native economic and political advancement in European areas, it does nothing to create new opportunities for native advancement in black communities simply because these communities do not exist. If this program is adopted as it stands, the native population will probably for the time being be worse off than before. But it will have one advantage. Through the machinery which the government has established, the native population may voice its demands. And it will be a dangerous policy to establish representative bodies and then pay them little heed.

The fundamental solution of the native problem in South Africa depends upon obtaining more land for the natives. In view of the land hunger of the European population this cannot be done directly. But following the example of the crofter system in Scotland, the proposal has been made that the government enact legislation authorizing natives to lease land from European owners in areas adjoining the native reserves, under the control of a Land Board which would insure the proper development of the land and security of tenure for the native.<sup>10</sup>

9. *The Times*, April 26, 1928, p. 15.

10. Cf. *Report of Select Committee on the Union Native Council Bill*, etc., S. C. 10—1927, pp. 14, 73.

Many European owners who are unable to develop all of their land would welcome this source of revenue. It is urged that such a plan of native leases and the imposition of a tax on the unearned increment of European land would do something to overcome the most vital obstacle to the settlement of the native question and gradually to make possible the establishment of self-sufficing native communities.

While the leaders in South Africa realize the necessity of adopting a constructive native policy, the great masses of Europeans who own the land and control the govern-

ment find it difficult to shake off century-old beliefs and support legislation involving the sacrifice of what they regard as their immediate interests. Nevertheless, there are many signs of a growing appreciation of the problem. The Dutch Reformed Church, the most important unofficial organization in the country, is taking the lead in the movement of popular education. Through outlining these comprehensive bills and proposing a concrete policy, the present Prime Minister has shown an intelligence and courage toward the native problem which none of his predecessors demonstrated.

## APPENDIX

### Land Distribution in the Union of South Africa

TOTAL AREAS (*in Morgen*)

	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cape .....	76,226,800	7,538,200	83,765,000
Natal .....	7,462,000	3,208,000	10,670,000
Transvaal .....	27,341,500	6,073,500	33,415,000
O. F. S. ....	14,860,300	153,700	15,014,000
Total .....	125,890,600	16,973,400	142,864,000

ALLOCATION OF NATIVE AREAS (*in Morgen*)

	<i>Scheduled Native Areas</i>	<i>Released Areas</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cape .....	6,044,000	1,494,200	7,538,200
Natal .....	2,775,000	433,000	3,208,000
Transvaal .....	1,065,700	5,007,800	6,073,500
O. F. S. ....	74,300	79,400	153,700
Total .....	9,959,000	7,014,400	16,973,400

### Population in the Union of South Africa, 1926

	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cape .....	705,000	1,740,000	2,445,000
Natal .....	158,000	1,240,000	1,398,000
Transvaal .....	607,000	1,650,000	2,257,000
O. F. S. ....	202,000	475,000	677,000

### Per Capita Distribution of Land

	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>
Cape .....	108.1 morgen	4.3 morgen
Natal .....	47.2 "	2.6 "
Transvaal .....	45.0 "	3.7 "
O. F. S. ....	73.6 "	0.3 <sup>1</sup> "

1. Report of the Select Committee on the Union Native Council Bill, p. 15.